



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

April 7, 2016

Blackman High School Football Boosters Funneled Money to Coaches

Comptroller investigators say the Blackman High School Football Boosters used a separate bank account in order to provide cash and purchase gift cards for its football coaches. Text messages about the account appear to show that suspicious activity was occurring.

The additional account was opened eight days after the Rutherford County Board of Education approved a policy requiring salaries and supplemental payments from school support organizations to be paid through the School Department's payroll system.

Investigators identified \$96,415.69 in unauthorized coaches' supplements and other questionable transactions that occurred between June 16, 2011 and March 27, 2015. These disbursements came from both the boosters' main account and the additional account. The former head football coach resigned on March 27, 2015.

Some of the questionable transactions included checks written to "Cash" and marked with descriptions on the memo line such as: "coaches supplement," "summer \$\$ #2," "summer \$ - final," and "gift cards." Other checks were written directly to coaches.

Booster club officials claim the former head football coach directed them to provide cash or purchase gift cards for himself, assistant coaches, and others. The former football coach denied receiving cash from football boosters other than reimbursements.

Comptroller investigators also question \$69,649.42 in fuel payments made by Blackman High School to a local gas station. Of this amount, \$9,930.98 was used for fuel purchased by the former head football coach or members of his family. Investigators could not determine if the fuel was used for school-related or personal purposes.

The findings and recommendations in the investigative report have been reviewed with the district attorney general for the Sixteenth Judicial District.

"Booster clubs are required to follow some basic rules to ensure that money is being handled appropriately," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "Our investigators determined that many of these requirements were not being met. I've noted the booster club accounts have now been closed, and the remaining funds have been deposited to the school account."

To view the investigation online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>

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